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Item 2 (b) of the provisional agenda

PREPARATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE BASIS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/228 AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT OTHER RELEVANT GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS

Summary of recommendations of regional preparatory meetings for UNCED

Report of the Secretary-General of the Conference

Further to document A/CONF.151/PC/44 the secretariat wishes in this addendum to outline the activities under preparation in the region covered by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

ESCWA will hold its Regional Preparatory Conference for UNCED at a Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Cairo from 10 to 12 September 1991. The ESCWA secretariat has provided the following information to the UNCED secretariat.

> "By its resolution 165 (XV) of May 1989 on Environment and Development, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) decided to undertake preparations at the regional level with a view to

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drawing up a report on the position of the Commission to be submitted to the UNCED in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1-12 June 1992). The ESCWA Conference is part of the international follow-up for the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. The Conference which will include all Arab countries, is also a demonstration of the Arab countries intention to take an active and constructive role in the preparations for the 1992 UNCED. The Arab countries in the ECA and ESCWA regions are committed to support all global actions aimed at environmental safeguards and the promotion of environmentally sound and sustainable development. In this context, and since March 1991, ESCWA has held three preparatory meetings for convening the Ministerial Arab Conference on Environment and Development (Cairo 10-12 September 1991). The Conference is expected to discuss, amend and adopt the following documents:

(a) Arab perspectives of environment and sustainable development. This document is based on numerous sectoral studies where the dimension of environmental degradations in the Arab countries has been identified. Among resources discussed are human resources, agricultural, natural and water resources. In-depth assessments are made of energy resources, industrial developments; coastal resources and marine environment; human settlements, public health and environmental services. The report focuses also on the environmental crisis in the Arab countries and sheds particular light on the roots of the problem such as hampering economic policies; lack of environmental legislations; institutional mismanagement; environmental illiteracy; environmental contradictions of poor and affluent societies in the region. It also elaborates on the effect of war and regional conflicts on environment. In this context, the challenges of the 1990s and beyond are identified to include sectoral activities including: population, human settlements, industrialization, etc., where the unsustainable policies of such activities are underlined for national and regional policy actions.

(b) The second document focuses on an Arab strategy on environmentally sound and sustainable development. In this context reference is made to the broad objectives for an Arab strategy to protect environment. Accordingly, the strategy is expected to be translated to concrete plan of action regarding the following priorities in the Arab countries.

(i) Protection of water resources and their conservation;

(ii) Support of agricultural resources and food production;

(iii) Management of industrial waste and hazardous chemicals;

(iv) Human settlements and environmental management;

(v) Sustainable energy use and applications of renewable sources of energy;

(vi) Interaction between man and his environment;

(vii) Regional and global environmental cooperation.

(c) The third document will contain a declaration on environment and development addressed to UNCED."